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Transportation Advisory Committee
730 Mass. Ave.
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To the TAC and others:

RE: TAC 2/10/2021 Meeting WRT Dan Amstutz' Mystic River to Minuteman Bikeway Summary

I'm writing to give some feedback on the above referenced topic presented at the recent TAC meeting by Dan Amstutz. This was my first knowledge of this project.

First I want to thank Mr. Amstutz for a lively and informative presentation of the scope and potential of this project, as well as a clear eyed view of some of the pitfalls. I take for granted that there is Town commitment to identify and improve access points to the Minuteman Bikeway and to find ways to link it radially with other bike projects. Furthermore, the 2/10/21 summary identifies several important point projects, such as:

1. Rationalizing the Medford St./Mystic Valley Parkway rotary for bikes and pedestrians and
2. Addressing grading and erosion problems at the Kimball Road ramp to the MVP sidewalk

The arching proposal has limitations: the lack of available thoroughfare width, and usability challenges at the Medford and Mystic Street intersections.

My specific concern is that the presentation appeared to assume that a bike lane could and should be separated from vehicle traffic by sistering up to existing sidewalks bordering the Lower Mystic Lake and the ACH field on Summer Street. In the case of the ACH field sidewalk, this is impractical because of the field fence, narrow sidewalk, no median, the demands of parking and a tough pinch point at #24 Summer. The case for a mixed strategy along the Lower Mystic Lake is arguable, because you can sacrifice a green median to widen the sidewalk. But 10 feet from the guardrail gets you off the curb. My gut hunch is that bikes should stick to the street and not mix with pedestrians here.

As for the Buzzell Field proposal, I think it makes more sense to encourage bikes to go another 250 yards west to the Mill Street intersection, where the Bikeway connection is trivial. This avoids the Buzzell maze around a basket ball court, a little league field, and a toddler park. Bikes can use this route now if they want, but we shouldn't channel more cut through traffic in there.

Thanks again for detailing this important project. I look forward to seeing shovel work come out of it.

Brian Hasbrouck